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23 March 2018

Mr Stuart Jones
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Dear Mr Jones

Short inspection of Lydgate Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 9 March 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in November 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Leaders are determined that pupils should achieve well both academically and as rounded individuals who are respectful and make a positive contribution to their school and community. The curriculum ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is given high priority. Consequently, pupils demonstrate tolerance and respect for others and they value being able to contribute their ideas and suggestions. For example, Year 6 pupils were keen to show me their quiet area. This had been instigated through a campaign to persuade leaders to give pupils responsibility for developing an unused space for Year 6 to use at breaktimes. This is also an example of how leaders have successfully addressed the area for improvement identified at the last inspection which was related to pupils taking the initiative for managing their own work more regularly.

Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils. They are passionate about supporting pupils to succeed and also ensuring that their pastoral needs are effectively met. Teaching and support staff work as a cohesive team who are keen to learn from each other to improve their own practice and ultimately the learning experience for pupils. As parents said, 'They go the extra mile.'

The school also benefits from having a strong team of governors. The governors are very aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are ambitious for the school and wholeheartedly support your vision. They carry out their roles

effectively, making sure that they have the necessary skills to support the school's development. Governors are aware that a small number of parents do not feel their concerns have been welcomed, listened to or considered fully. For example, site security is a concern for some parents. While leaders have taken action to mitigate the risks, given the school's difficult site, parents are not clear what action has been taken and why. Similarly, some staff think that communication from leaders could be boosted. Governors have already begun to take action to address this.

Pupils' attainment has been consistently above the national average for reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2. The proportion of pupils who exceeded the expected standards was also above the national average in 2017. However, disadvantaged pupils do not make as much progress as their peers and consequently their attainment is not as strong as either their peers or other pupils nationally. Leaders are determined in their actions to improve progress for disadvantaged pupils and are employing a range of strategies to support this development.

Safeguarding is effective.

A culture of safeguarding is clearly present across the school. Leaders have ensured that all staff have received the training they need to fulfil their responsibilities in relation to keeping pupils safe. Leaders take appropriate action where they have concerns about a pupil's safety. However, you recognise that the procedure is not always applied consistently, which results in some records not being as well organised and detailed as they should be. You are keen to take immediate measures to improve this essential aspect of safeguarding.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that staff look after them well. They do not feel that bullying is an issue. They are confident that staff deal with any rare issues of poor behaviour firmly and fairly. Leaders record behaviour incidents thoroughly but are not carefully analysing the valuable information that they hold. You agree that this would help you to spot any emerging patterns that may otherwise go unnoticed. The curriculum effectively develops pupils' understanding of potential dangers such as crossing roads, bullying and using the internet. As a result, they know how to keep themselves and others safe.

Inspection findings

- Leaders have ensured that pupils achieve high standards in reading. Attainment has been consistently well above the national average in 2016 and 2017 and pupils have made very strong progress. This is because reading has a high profile throughout the school and all staff have high expectations for pupils' reading. Pupils read regularly, both individually and across the curriculum. This helps them to develop as confident and fluent readers. They have access to high-quality texts and classrooms contain enticing book corners. As one pupil said, 'I feel inspired by the school to read.' English units of work are often centred around a book and these link to the wider curriculum when appropriate. This breadth of reading bolsters pupils' understanding of the world around them, helps them to

make links with their learning in different subjects and is encouraging pupils to read widely and often.

- Leaders are rightly disappointed that disadvantaged pupils are not achieving as well as their peers. However, leaders are passionate about improving outcomes for this group of pupils and are taking action to evaluate more closely the impact of the support that these pupils receive. Leaders' new systems are giving them more precise information about pupils' next steps and the effectiveness of the intervention strategies used. This is helping to make sure that pupils receive tailored support such as the reading intervention which takes place before the start of school each morning. Pupils who take part can already see the improvement in their reading, which is building their confidence to access learning more generally. Leaders are keen to build on these successes so that progress for disadvantaged pupils continues to quicken and the difference between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally diminishes more rapidly.
- You are committed to providing pupils with a broad curriculum. Parents, pupils and staff rightly recognise the curriculum as the school's greatest strength. The highly stable and experienced staff support this provision well. High levels of subject expertise enable pupils to access wide-ranging opportunities in subjects such as music, art and sport. The school's termly art theme is evident on display boards throughout the school and leaders are keen to make sure that every pupil has their work proudly displayed. Extra-curricular provision is also varied with several clubs every day, including French, fencing, bridge and cookery. You encourage pupils to develop interests and consequently participation in activities such as sport and music is high. The curriculum provides a rich range of experiences and opportunities which capture pupils' interest and spark their enthusiasm. Learning activities have been designed to provide purposeful and memorable experiences. Pupils relish these opportunities and show interest and enjoyment in their learning. They appreciate the numerous opportunities they have to take responsibilities and make a difference to the school and wider community. Pupils' enjoyment and interest in their learning contributes strongly to the pride they take in their school and their consistently high attendance.
- You are ambitious for pupils and are keen to support staff to develop so they are able to have an increasing impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Teaching and learning teams give all staff the opportunity to explore aspects of the school's curriculum and identify where improvements can be made. This not only empowers staff and develops them as leaders but ensures that the curriculum and the quality of the learning experience for pupils keep improving. New staff are also inducted well through this process and develop effectively.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- progress for disadvantaged pupils improves so that their attainment is at least in line with that of other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2

- behaviour incidents are analysed with greater rigour so that leaders are able to learn from any patterns and trends which emerge
- communication with parents and staff is enhanced so that all parties feel well informed and listened to
- procedures for recording child protection concerns are consistently applied.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Sheffield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Godfrey
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and the deputy headteacher, the year group leaders and a teaching and learning team. I also met with four members of the governing body, including the chair, and spoke with a representative of the local authority by telephone. I evaluated documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, information about pupils' progress, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance records, and information about safeguarding. We visited classrooms together to observe teaching and learning. Together with the year group leaders, we scrutinised the work of a sample of pupils. I listened to three pupils read. I spoke with several parents and carers at the start of the school day and considered the 127 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I met with a group of pupils from a range of year groups and spoke with a group of staff. I also took into consideration the 38 responses to the staff survey and the 110 responses to the pupil survey.